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*Argentina*  
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*you should read*  
Jan 1978  
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WORKING TAPE - 3 - SIDE A/SIDE B

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
☒ Release ☒ Excise ☐ Deny  
Exemption(s): NR  
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full  
☐ Classify as      ☐ Extend as      ☐ Downgrade to       
Date      Declassify on      Reason     

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Lot 81D208  
Box 4963 (2/12)

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Dear Michele, Patt and Mark:

There is so much information to get up to you I am taking advantage of this electronic means to conduct a one way stanler telephone call between us, between vacation and throwing my back out of joint through a faulty lifting of a heavy trunk I have only been in the office a couple of weeks this year. Things unfortunately seem to be slipping very badly on all fronts and I wanted to send you a tape to give you my personal veiw of the situation here in Argentina. Here is a menu of the things on the tape I am going to talk rather quickly because your time is, I know, is limited to listen. First subject will be the situation in Argentina. Second subject will be the situation in the Embassy. Third I'll talk about reporting problems that we are having here.

The situation in Argentina has undergone some important changes in the last two months. Patt we fully entered into what you called stage two of our easy and cosmetic actions by the government of Argentina. The removal at Christmas time from the pan of 387 political prisoners was step one followed by the publication of course of the 3,600 or so persons still being held under the pan. In addition we have been receiving very strong signals that the huenta is considering the U. S. high interest cases, we expect Alejandro Deutsch, who

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everybody agrees is as clean as a hounds tooth to be released shortly. The Deutsch girl as well as the Vogler girl as well as Timerman, are much harder cases. There has been no movement on the difficult issues of the disappeared and calling halt to what call in my discussions with the Argentine Times of midnight operations. It is obviously clear that the government has targeted soft targets, marxists and relatives of terrorists in its latest stage. Most importantly the government is beginning to ask us for recognition of the things that they have done with respect to the ~~pan~~ prisoners. ~~There~~ playing their trumps and they want something back for it. Both the Navy and the Foreign Ministry in concerted efforts called me in during the week before the IFI loan decision was made in the Christopher Committee and pleaded that if there was to be further liberation in Argentina they had to be able to show that their previous moves had been recognized by the United States Government.

The next range of developments is the increasing desperation of Massera as he faces retirement probably in September of this year to dislodge Vidella from his position as Commander in Chief of the Army. Massera, when he is not making speeches attacking the Chileans regarding the Beagle Channel, has been telling his visitors that the Argentine human rights record is terrible, that the

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Army is the blame and that this is a serious international and domestic political consideration. The fact that Massera is making these noises for his own political purposes should not lead us to overly discount them. Massera is one of the few political animals in this country, he evidently has taken a pulse reading and sees that human rights is an issue which is important for him to be on the right side of. In today's paper former President <sup>from Dieze</sup> in a statement marking the anniversary of his government being elected into power a number of years ago issued a statement in which he says that ~~the~~ respect for human rights is something which the Argentine citizens can expect. These are straws in the wind but they are important. The legitimization of criticism of this government human rights record by its own people, not just the permanent assembly, not just by Ambassador Castro, Patt Derian or Secretary Vance on a visit, is really the key to any substantial progress. We're seeing the first few pieces of evidence that may, repeat may be, occurring. The French have been the major battler on human rights in the last two months. The disappearance of the nuns, the total unsatisfactory efforts by the government of Argentina to recover them, the phony Montonero cover up story, the obvious involvement of the first Corp in the operation lead to an extremely bitter exchange of notes between Disgard and the

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Dehi cancellation of training for Argentine soliders

at the senior French military academies, should we remember that only the French and the Americans have military groups in Argentina. The next step was the Paris bishops refusal to allow the Argentine Embassy to conduct a special memorial mass for San Martine, the George Washington of this country, which has brought enunication and probably lies behind your dear friend Captain Alórez, quick trip to Paris to try to repair Argentine "negative image". Today Minister Sarjene responded in his own way by removing the French language from the curriculum of all the schools in Buenos Aires Province putting 600 French teachers out of work. Mean while the more constructive manner the French have given informal refuge to an Argentine citizen in their Embassy while they make arrangements for her to leave the country. Her husband was released after serving his jail sentence from La Plata and the disappeared along with three other released prisoners two weeks ago. The French are trying to get her out. The Ministry of Interior suggested that she needed special protection. The Ministry of Interior Harguindeguy has also indicated a French Priest and a French nun as being individuals who are "in trouble" and the French Embassy has made arrangements for them to return to Europe. The European Community Ambassadors here have prepared a message which we have not seen the text of yet for a EC9 demarsh to the Argentine governments on the

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human rights situation. I believe the message will probably focus on the disappearance of their nationals. Small amount of press play here from Europe that their consideration both in France and in Holland having their world cup football teams withdraw has raised a number of eyebrows in Argentina. This would be an absolute body blow to the Argentine pride if there was a fact of withdrawal, however, competitive sports being what they are especially the world cup which is much bigger for the rest of the world than the Olympics; there seems to be little chance of this withdrawal ever taking place. Alright, that's a nut shell of what's going on, in the country. The Argentine Government is playing its trump cards, it's asking us for recognition that it's doing some good things. It is trying to get its repressive actions under better military control. It is retargetting these actions towards softer targets, intellectual subversion as the President Vidella says guilty of bad thoughts.

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Ambassador Castro is doing a good public relations job here he is traveling around the country telling the Argentines publically that they have a negative image in the world, they have got to re-establish due process procedures dealing with criminals in their society, etc. He's up front in his public statements. T

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Reporting

The Embassy sent a report on the nuns during my absence. it ended up by saying that we were puzzled. We were asked just before the IFI Christopher Committee vote to send in a balance sheet of human rights activities. I presented a full description of what had happened to the nuns. This was voted down by the country team as being mere speculation and the Embassy once again stated that we continued to be puzzled by the disappearance of the nuns. We know what happened to the nuns. In late November and early December the mothers. (There was a pause on the tape then it began again with the following)

In early December a group of the mothers lead by the now disappeared Mrs. Devasente developed an action program to bring increasing pressure on Videla to live up to his promises regarding peace by Christmas. They planned to stage a major demonstration in the plaza on the 15th of December bringing in mothers of disappeared children from all over the country. This was to be preceded on December 10th by a full page advertisement in

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La <sup>IV</sup>vacacion signed by ~~a~~ thousands mothers of disappeared persons. On the 24th of December the mothers were scheduling an all night vigil in the Plaza <sup>MAYO</sup>Demayo after midnight services to be held in the national cathedral which faces on the plaza. On December 8th Ramyo Barado who worked with a church group, which very much in support of the mother very close contact here at the Embassy, was picked up at his house at approximately 4:30 p.m. Between 8:30 and 9:00 p.m., five to seven unmarked cars pulled up in front of the Santa Cruz church where money and signatres were being collected for the advertisement to appear in the La ~~V~~vacacion on Saturday the 10th. The police came in, took away eight or nine of the organizers of the Santa Cruz referendum as well as the money and the signature lists which had been collected at the church that day. That night and the following day four homes of the disappeared persons were searched by persons identifying themselves as police officials. On Saturday the 10th, in the morning, Mrs. Deva ~~se~~nte was picked up a block from her house at 8:30 a.m. in the morning and thrown into a Ford Falcon kicking and screaming. Later the same morning a French, ~~a~~ sister, La Anee accompanied two gentlemen from her house and drove away with them. Now on the following day, Sunday the 11th, the Press received a package consisting of a letter from the sisters stating that they were being held by governmental forces opposed to Vadel/a.

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A letter on Montonero stationery saying that the nuns would be free if a number of demands were met, and a large 8 x 10 glossy photograph of the two nuns holding up Saturday's newspaper with a large Motonero flag in their background. The thing was so obviously contrived that even the hardcore def~~en~~d~~er~~s such as Ar~~e~~lia could not bring themselves to suggest that the Montoneros really held the nuns. The information was disseminated by the first ~~M~~corp. The French protested, the Argentines replied but the bottom line is that today La Plaza de ~~M~~ayo instead of between two and three hundred mothers on each Thursday afternoon, there are forty or fifty. Although the country team is puzzled regarding the nuns disappearance, based on the facts presented it is clear by of the circumstantial evidence that this is not an out of control operation. There were a series of four actions, the arrest of Bardo, the arrest at the church, follow-up searches of homes plus the capture on Saturday morning of the second French nun, plus the leader of La Plaza de ~~M~~ayo mothers. The Montoneros used polaroid cameras and do not produce 8 x 10 glossies of persons they are holding for ransom. Unfortunately the Embassy official position is that the disappearance of the nuns is still inexplicable. The reason it is inexplicable is because it is another concrete manifestation that the government has changed its targeting. The first phase of the targeting repression in the country was of course the hardcore Montonero and

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erupt terrorists, they have been virtually eliminated.

The second phase which began some six months ago which the Embassy has still not reported on was focusing its repressive midnight operations on the marxists intellectuals subversives, people who in Vadel's definition <sup>are</sup> is guilty of "bad thoughts." Our files are bulging with student leaders, psychologists, psychiatrists, members of socialist discussions groups, etc. who have disappeared. Family information activities and profiles of these individuals point to the fact that they were not members of the Montonero organization nor supporters but they were advertly leftists. The next phase <sup>inside</sup> in which we saw in a concrete way in December during a subway strike 12 of the subway union leaders disappeared and the same month 19 leaders of the ceramic union disappeared during labor difficulties. North of Buenos Aires, South of Buenos Aires in an automobile plant, six labor shop floor grumblers received the same treatment. All this is kept by an action in December in which a dozen key people in the mothers group are disappeared. Argentine sources have indicated that during screening of the 225 mothers who were arrested either early November or late October in the Plaza de Congreso that only two of the individuals had records with the police. One was Sister Alecia, the French nun who had a record of subversive activities in Corentez Province due to her social welfare efforts and another woman who was a member of the Argentine League for the Rights Man which is a <sup>document</sup> to

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Argentina front. What I believe we are seeing is that ~~the government is entering into a third stage in which~~ the forces of the repression are being used for regime maintenance. ~~Stage one anti-terrorists, stage two~~ anti-subversive, ~~stage three regime maintenance.~~ The

of the military dictatorship here is as it has always been the economic program. The country is experiencing a recession. ~~How~~ We read in the papers daily of layoffs, general motors laid off 600 workers yesterday, textile industry is down, the tractor industry is down. Argentine economy is feeling the effects of a very rigorous Chicago monetarist squeeze being applied by Marteniz <sup>DE HOZ</sup> ~~Dies~~. It is a painful medicine. My real fear is that we will see increasing labor unrest in the next two or three months here in Argentina and that the repressive security forces will be directed in terms of bringing the workers back into line through a policy of disappearances and this will give a new long term reason for the maintenance and continuation of the governments repressive security forces. The forces will change targets. More efforts will be directed at subversion in labor unions, subversion in education. This will replace the war on terrorism. Sorry to have taken so much of time in terms of talking about the nuns but its a key event.

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[ Analysis of the list of persons detained under the Paveraview National has shown that only one or two percent of the political prisoners are formally

. The permanent assembly, the mothers of La Plaza de Mayo and the have come in on several occasions to express their abject dismay over the incompleteness of the list and their fear that the government will wash its hands of the entire situation after the publication of the lists. ]

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[ I have done a number of cables which tied in reported events to targeting by the Argentine security forces of individuals for intellectual subversion. This has been taken out of all of messages going out. Just this week one of our military attache had one of his reports turned back by the front office ]

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in which one of his military contacts in the Argentine Air Force described the governments efforts at weeding out marxists and subversives. The problem is that I think we have passed stage two of targeting against subversives and have now entered in stage three where labor union leadership, human rights organizations and other groups are targeted not because they are either terrorists nor marxists subversives but because they are conducting activities innumerable to the interest of the state. NR

The very able Argentine propaganda machinery picked up the ~~Tad~~man speech and took the deckalog as it is called here with respect to limitations on our human rights policy and ran it on the front page of La Penyon a foul up on the following day with a further analytical piece. The permanent assembly, the mothers of the La Plaza Mayo, and the all made calls on me immediately after the Toonman ~~T~~en points were published expressing their absolute fear that the United States had changed its policy and was going to modify its human rights policy towards Argentina which ~~is the~~ ~~was~~ A keystone to their efforts here in Argentina.

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WORKING TAPE 3 - SIDE B

The Embassy country team made a decision that it would not report the reaction of the human rights groups but would only report in its daily press roundup. The treatment given the time and speech in La Penon. Another buried gem is the fact that the human rights in Argentina are becoming increasingly radical as the promises of the government for action in the human rights area appears to be only to be cosmetic. The permanent assembly has proposed a major shift in which it would no longer single out President Vidella for special consideration in its publications and messages but would begin a policy of considering the government has been represented by the Junta as a whole. The assembly has seen no indication that Vidella is in fact opposed or trying to moderate the repressive operations within the society.

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**The next five pages have been eliminated because they are entirely irrelevant.**

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My very best regards to you all. Michele let me just put a little p.s. and thank you very much for your good letter regarding the visit of Herb Semmel for the Center of Law and Social Policy and the International League of Human Rights. I unfortunately did miss these gentlemen when they were through in Buenos Aires. The figures that Sanche received from Hargenduey are of interest and I appreciate those that are a little bit more detailed than what we received from Kaplin when he debriefed the group before they left. You might mention to Judy Chavchavadze that we have moved ahead on a few cases. We've got about ten identified cases for right of option certificates. I went and identified about a dozen cases and took them down to the consulate and we had a meeting last week. We went over them and have selected eight or nine cases which has some U. S. interest as the first batch of cases for us to present to the Argentine Government for information. The problem that we have is that in terms of giving the right of option certificates we are handing blank checks. There is alot of concern within the consulate that the individuals that we will be taking are pinkos or crypto terrorists, etc. The problem will not be made any easier by the information which is contained in their official Argentine files. We still do not know if whether the Argentines are going to clean the files up and make some judgement on them or whether they are going to give us the information that they have. For example, we do know that in some of the cases people who the Argentines have released

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who were high interest cases for this Embassy. The Argentines have told us that these people were. One case in particular was a priest, <sup>that he was</sup> a recruiter for the Montoneros and was responsible for military training for Montonero recruits and, of course, this information was phony as hell in as much as the Argentines then turned around and released the priest from the pen just before Christmas. 'Please <sup>tell</sup> Judy that we moving ahead all be it slowly.

NR

It appears in the Embassy's around town in the right of option program the Dutch had a team here last week reviewing applications for refugee status. The Canadians called me this morning asking me what are doing. I will be meeting with them in the near future to discuss the right of option problem. The Chakareita cemetery story which you heard from <sup>Sansunelli</sup> Facanetta has also been surfaced around in the French Embassy. The French are convinced that among that group were there nuns. One police sergeant who evidently stumbled across the truck bringing the ~~cond~~<sup>re</sup>avias to (long pause in the tape - then continues as follows;) field outside of, on the outskirts of greater Buenos Aires. Local people did not know that they

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existed until an armed helicopter came down and finger printed them. Another story is between 36 and 40 women who were washed ashore Amandayaho which is near a beach resort area 200 miles from Buenos Aires down the river. This later appearance with information that we developed, but again are unable to report from the Argentine police official who bragged to one of our Embassy officers regarding the Argentine method for disposing of bodies. This is now according to the source been centralized in an operation in for all actions occurring within the first corp. People after they have been interrogated <sup>or are</sup> ~~on our~~ deemed no longer of use and a decision has been made at a senior level they should be executed. The people are then being told that they are being transferred to Coraendaz Province and must receive an injection before they go for health reasons. The people gracefully submit to the injection which contains curia which is a derivative of the poison used by Amazon natives in their blow guns. Evidently it has the effect of contracting the muscles. By receiving the dose the people very shortly there after die and one of the effects of the poison is to contract their lungs. They are then placed in planes which take off at the de capitia Mayo airfield and are dropped in the mouth of the river where they sink and are quickly devoured by the fish. We have gotten in touch with Mrs. Lajamonavich to inform her that our

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request before the Forwig. The Forwig operation is absolutely broken down. I am dutifully building up a record by putting in the high interest U. S. cases to the foreign office but I have not received any replies from the foreign office on these cases since just prior to the Vance visit to Argentina. When I last queried Arliga regarding this he said very shortly we will have published the list of all persons being detained under the pen in Argentina. We have no other prisoners, therefore anyone's name who is not on a pen list is not known to the government. There is no need for us to reply to your requests. I suggested to Jim Bumpus when he was here that if we really want action on these cases that in addition to our going through a ritual gesture of submitting them to the foreign office that we ask the congressional offices and the families involved to get in touch with Inter-American Human Rights Commission in Washington. Now I have not seen any letters suggesting to interested parties that they approach the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. However, I think it should be done. If there is a policy problem in terms of the department doing that formally then I think we should make some arrangements to at least tell people or congressional staffers informally that is very advantageous route for the people to take.

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Turning to another point and ~~that the number of~~  
disappeared. We have gotten a new update from a source  
within the Ministry of the Interior that there are  
seven thousands registered persons with the missing  
persons office in the Ministry of the Interior. Now  
there are two adjustments that have to be made to that  
number. First some of the persons registered as  
being disappeared have in fact reappeared. We know

on the weekly pen list we see one or two persons  
who have been disappeared to this Embassy surfacing.  
In addition we know that the permanent assembly record  
which are the largest in the country. They have  
approximately 2,400 disappearances listed in their  
office. By contrast the Embassy has just a little under  
800. The <sup>1</sup> a group has a bit over a  
thousand. I think the hardest number that we can look  
at is the Ministry of the Interior figure, which  
unfortunately we don't have from Harguindeguy but we  
have only from <sup>a</sup> confidential source that we have to  
protect. But there are over 7,000 reported  
disappearances to the Ministry, so if we adjust a small  
percentage of those as people who have returned and  
then multiply that number by some factor of people whose  
children have disappeared but have not reported them to  
the Ministry of the Interior. I think probably most  
cases in Buenos Aires Province especially in the  
metropolitan area due in fact report their childrens  
disappearances to the Ministry of the Interior. However,

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it can only be done in the capitol it cannot be done on a regional basis. Consequently, if someone is missing

it means a special trip to Buenos Aires in order to make the registration. I do not think that is done in the majority of the cases there. There has been some progress we do see a slow down in the number of cases reported to the Embassy of disappearances.

This also reflecting the statistics of other organizations.

It is still a significant number of disappearances. We have between 20 and 30 a month reported to this Embassy.

I would imagine that we have to multiply that by a factor of two, three, four, five to ten or something like that. The number of people who will actually come to the American Embassy to report a disappearance must be fairly small. However, it does speak well as an indication that our policy is really understood and known to the population here in Argentina that we do get the parents of 30 disappeared children who come to the United States Embassy each month asking for help. I'm seeing almost all of them. Everyone is received we are answering all the letters to President Carter to the Ambassador, to Patt. I personally sign off on the letters. We're being as responsive as we can in a public relations. Since here that's easily done it just takes a lot of time but what we're not getting with respect to the disappeared is any signal of interest on behalf of the Argentine Government. Well I could

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ramble on for considerably longer, but I want to get this into the pouch to you today. Michele if you get a chance, and I realize that you are up to your ears in alligators. I would greatly appreciate a quick tape from you kind of filling me in on what is going on in Washington. what the state of play is for human rights in ARA imparticular over the next year. Your thoughts on this would be most welcomed. All the best and do take care of yourself and we'll look forward to see you in the not too distant future.

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